Heraclitus Ridens:

AT

A Dialogue between Jeſt and Earneſt, concerning the Times.

——————— *Pulchra Laverna,*
Da mihi fallere, da juſtum ſanctúmque videri, Horat. Epiſt.

Engliſhed,

Laverna! Let me ſanctify'd appear,
Inſpire me handſomly to cheat, and ſneer;
Whigs labours ſure can never be in vain,
Where Zeal is Trick, and *Godlineſs great Gain.*

Tueſday, November the 22d. 1681.

Jeſt. AN *Information* quotha! Well, commend me to *Tom Dangerfield*; he in the Title-page of his late Pamphlet, tells the Buyer plainly what he is to expect for his ſix pence, *viz. MORE SHAMS*, &c. And I am confident, that if Captain *Wilkinſon* were half ſo honeſt a man as he ſhou'd be, he would not have given his *Imprimatur* to this piece under any other Title.

Earn. Why, I thought that his Name in the Title-page had denoted him to be the Author.

Jeſt. No, No, it denotes if you will, his leave to the publiſher to make ſilly People believe ſo. But ever while you live, a name to a ſeditious Pamphlet ſignifies only ſome needy Fellow, who for a Guinny or two, or more or leſs, as the caſe requires, has put his hand to the Manuſcript without ſo much as giving himſelf the trouble, or perhaps being able to read one word on't. Now this you muſt know warrants the Stationer or any other perſon to call it that mans Information or Narrative, witneſs *Bedloe*'s Narrative of Fires, *P---ces* Narrative, and twenty more that I could name.

Earn. Well, and if this had been call'd a *Narrative*, would it not, think you, have been every jot as advantagious to the Stationer and as ſerviceable to the little Gentleman you wot of, as now under the Title of an *Information*.

Jeſt. As to that, you muſt note the World has of late been ſo cloy'd with *Narratives* of all ſorts, that now the very name is apt to give one a Vomit, and I imagine that to be the true reaſon why the Title of a *Narrative* was in this caſe rejected.

Earn. Well, I am ſatisfied that there is a great deal of Knavery in the World.

Jeſt. Ay, and a great deal of foolery to encourage it, elſe your Sham-plot-makers might e'n go hang themſelves.

Earn. Why, I was told that ſome of 'em were in a fair way t'other day to have done ſo, upon the ſudden diſappointment they met with in the matter of *Fitz. Gerald.*

Jeſt. Oh, I know whereabouts you are, that's the Fellow who has been ſo long a Priſoner in the *Marſhalſey* in *Southwark* for Debts contracted in the ſervice of the Proteſtant Intereſt. Well, I could never yet fathom the bottom of that buſineſs. But I remember about a month ago I was at *Bruens* Coffee-houſe, and the Whiggs there were full of the matter, and by their Diſcourſe, which was chiefly by way of Shrug and Nod, and lifting up their Hands and Eyes (a Dialect which a Friend of mine who uſes that Houſe interpreted to me) I underſtand, that they had been heightened by their Ring-leaders (the Gentlemen of the upper-Houſe) into an expectation that this ſame *Fitz-Gerald* would make the moſt conſiderable diſcovery of Sham-plots that the World had bin bleſt with ſince the Invention of Meal-Tubs, but 'twould have given a Man a ſtool (if his Body were not very

very cautive) to have ſeen a day or two after how they look'd.

Earn. Why, if the matter be as I have heard, ſome of them are like to look through a Pillory; was there not a ſecret Committee of four that were appointed by the ſo famous Knights and Squires (I can't think of their names) to examine the poor wretch to a Letter under his Hand, wherein he charg'd the three Juſtices of the Peace, for whoſe integrity and prudence the whole Borough of *Southwark* are able to vouch, with endeavouring to ſuborn him to throw the Plot upon the Proteſtants, *&c.*

Jeſt. I have heard ſomewhat to that purpoſe, and that one of that Committee was a holy Siſter that uſually goes a hearing to Mr. *Slaughter*'s Conventicle.

Earn. Well, that's a precious man, ſhe I tell ye he out-does *Bull*, and has been very active for the Proteſtant Intereſt.

Jeſt. And upon the credit of that Commendation, I'le hold you a Diſh of *Coffee* that he was at the middle and both ends of this matter.

Earn. Not unlikely, but prithee how came this hopeful Project to fail?

Jeſt. That ſtory is too long to tell you now, let it ſuffice that by a very great Providence it did fail, and that at the very time too when a Narrative, Declaration, or it may be *Information* of the matter projected was about to be let looſe into the World to as bad purpoſe as that under the name of Captain *Wilkinſon*, and 'tis probable the ſame too changing the names and a very few circumſtances.

Earn. Why truly, (ſo as it be for the good of the publick) I ſhould think ſuch a Plot may be as well made to an Information, as ſuch an Information to a Plot. Would you when the Plot was ſpoil'd, have had the Contrivers of it to have lighted Tobacco with that Information about which ſo much time and Oil had been ſpent; I muſt tell you, it would have been a burning ſhame. Why a Friend of mine, man, rather than he would make ſewel of an old Window-frame about which much Art had been beſtowed, was at the charge of building a Houſe to it; And I don't think that he was half ſo good a Husband in that matter as they have been in this; for let me tell you, ſuch kind of Pamphlets work Wonders with the credulous multitude and the Contrivers of 'em know it but too well. But prithee, tell me ſeriouſly, doſt think that any one, not being a Juſtice of Peace, is not liable to an Indictment for taking formal Informations againſt ſuch as are ſo; I ask, becauſe it happens to be the caſe of a Neighbour of mine, whoſe name you muſt give me leave to conceal.

Jeſt. The Caſe you muſt know is new and extraordinary, and I am no more a Lawyer than you are, and therefore all that I can ſay to you in the matter is, that I have heard ſome ſay that have ſerv'd (as they told me) upon the Juries at the *Old Baily*, that in all ſuch Caſes the Enquiry ought to be, Whether the Fact was done *malitioſe* or *Inepte*, and that if a Jury believe in their Conſciences that the perſon accuſed is (either by nature or for want of good Education) ſilly, the Bill ought to be return'd *Ignoramus*. Now I confeſs I am not of their mind, becauſe, beſides that I have heard others more learned in the Law ſay, that in all ſuch Caſes the Law ſuppoſes Malice; I my ſelf have formerly obſerv'd Juries in all ſuch Caſes to find Bills upon the ſingle proof of the Fact; and I believe they'd be content that their Friends ſhould proclaim them Fools in open Court at any time to deliver them from a Pillory or a worſe puniſhment.

Earn. Ay, ſo would any one elſe: but let me ask ye one Queſtion while I think on't, Was *Fitz Gerald*, that we were talking of before, ſworn by the Committee to the Accuſation he gave againſt the three Juſtices?

Jeſt. I have heard he was adjur'd (and I think that's to be ſworn) *to ſpeak the truth, the whole truth*, &c. though I ſuppoſe they did not tender him the Book.

Earn. Well, but did the Committee make their Report?

Jeſt. Yes, yes, and had the thanks of their Employers too; and about a fortnight after, bring under a hickuping Diſpenſation,

He has ſworn it, ſays Tom,
Get off as they can.
Trinonny no
Cuc-come hither Nan.

And little did he know then that all the Roguery had been detected a day or two before; But I'm told you'l have the whole matter made publick in a few days, and therefore I'le take my leave of you at preſent.

Earn. Hold a little, I pray take a few *Queries* with you afore you go.

Query 1. Whether if true Proteſtant Diſſenters had the ſole Power of puniſhing Papiſts, any man could expect to eſcape unpuniſh'd that is not a frequenter of Conventicles?

2. Whether the making a *Raree Shew*, and getting it to be glorioufly attended one day in the year in commemoration of Qu. *Elizabeths* coming to the Crown, does ſufficiently commute for their breaking her Laws every day in the year beſides?

3. Whether *Dick Implement*'s putting in the Clauſe of the Act for the obſervation of *Sunday*, is not a deſign to trapan Conſtables and Head-boroughs into the forfeiture of five pounds.

4. Whether the Univerſity of *Salamanca* have not ſent for the Doctors Gown again, he appearing of late *en cuerpo*?

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